

Message Text

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ORIGIN BIB-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00
INRE-00 NSCE-00 SS-15 SSO-00 PA-01 PRS-01 USIE-00
DODE-00 SP-02 HA-05 COME-00 EB-08 FCC-01 OTPE-00
ACDA-12 CU-04 L-03 /086 R

DRAFTED BY BIB;WRROBERTS;KLB
APPROVED BY EUR:RVINE
EUR/EE-CSCHMIDT
EUR/SOV-MLEVITSKY (SUBSTANCE)
EUR/CE-SKLINGAMAN
EUR/WE-KSMITH
EUR/RPM-SLEDOGAR
EUR/RPM-JKORNBLUM
-----092140 210019Z /70

O R 202250Z JAN 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY WARSAW PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY SOFIA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PRIORITY
INFO AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 016738

GENEVA JOHN MCNEILL PASS TO DAS (EUR) LUERS

E.O. 11652: GDS
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TAGS: PFOR, CSCE

SUBJECT: RIGHT OF REPLY TO RFE/RL BROADCASTS
BELGRADE FOR CSCE

1. BOARD FOR INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING,WHICH IS CHARGED BY

P.L. 93-129 WITH STATUTORY OVERSIGHT OVER RADIO FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY BROADCASTS, IN ITS 1977 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT, FORMALLY URGED MAJOR DIPLOMATIC EFFORT TO SECURE AN END TO JAMMING OF INTERNATIONAL RADIO BROADCASTS AMONG STATES SIGNATORY TO CSCE FINAL ACT. BIB CITED LANGUAGE OF HELSINKI FINAL ACT IN WHICH "THE PARTICIPATING STATES NOTE THE EXPANSION IN THE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION BROADCAST BY RADIO, AND EXPRESS THE HOPE FOR THE CONTINUATION OF THIS PROCESS, SO AS TO MEET THE INTEREST OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AMONG PEOPLES AND THE AIMS SET FORTH BY THIS CONFERENCE. AT MOMENT, JAMMING OF RFE/RL BROADCASTS CONTINUES IN SOVIET UNION, BULGARIA, CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND, TO LESSER EXTENT IN POLAND, DESPITE U.S. EFFORTS, SUPPORTED BY WESTERN ALLIES, TO SECURE AT BELGRADE REVIEW CONFERENCE AND ELSEWHERE, REMOVAL OF ARTIFICIAL OBSTACLES TO RECEPTION OF RADIO BROADCASTS.

2. IN ITS 1978 ANNUAL REPORT, TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS ON JANUARY 31, BIB IS MAKING OFFER TO SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS TO GIVE THEM, UNDER AGREED CONDITIONS, BROADCAST TIME FOR RIGHT OF REPLY TO SPECIFIC RFE/RL PROGRAMS. THIS OFFER, WHICH IS MADE ON PERSONAL INITIATIVE OF FORMER AMBASSADOR TO POLAND JOHN A. GRONOUSKI, WHO ASSUMED BIB CHAIRMANSHIP LAST SUMMER, HAS BEEN DISCUSSED WITH THE DEPARTMENT. CONFIDENTIAL

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BECAUSE IT REPRESENTS A DEPARTURE FROM PAST PRACTICE AND AS SUCH MAY RECEIVE CONSIDERABLE PUBLICITY, RELEVANT TEXT IS TRANSMITTED HERewith SO THAT POSTS MAY DISCUSS IT, AS DEEMED ADVISABLE, WITH APPROPRIATE HOST GOVERNMENTS' OFFICIALS.

3. BIB 1978 ANNUAL REPORT QUOTES PRESIDENT CARTER'S REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING OF MARCH 22, 1977, WHICH NOTED THAT SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN AUTHORITIES HAVE QUOTE FAILED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE MANIFEST CHANGES IN RFE/RL FUNDING, OVERSIGHT AND PROGRAMS SINCE 1971 UNQUOTE AND IN PARTICULAR THE POLICY DOCUMENTS PROMULGATED BY THE BOARD (AND CLEARED BY THE DEPARTMENT) WHICH DEFINE RFE/RL AS INFORMATIONAL AND RESPONSIBLY INDEPENDENT MEDIA OF NEWS AND NEWS ANALYSIS, DEDICATED TO PRINCIPLES ENSHRINED IN THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER AND THE FINAL ACT. (THESE DOCUMENTS ARE INCLUDED AS APPENDICES IN THE BIB 1977 ANNUAL REPORT, WHICH WAS SENT TO POSTS, AND ARE REPRINTED ONCE MORE IN 1978 REPORT.) NEW BIB REPORT STATES:

BEGIN TEXT: WITH NO REFERENCE TO THE ACTUAL CONTENT

OF RFE/RL PROGRAMS, THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES, AT BELGRADE AND ELSEWHERE, CONTINUE TO CHARGE THAT SUCH PROGRAMS CONSTITUTE QUOTE DEFAMATORY PROPAGANDA UNQUOTE. THE BOARD FIRMLY REJECTS THIS CHARGE. OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS, IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED TO SEVERAL OF THE EAST EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS THAT THEY CALL TO THE BOARD'S ATTENTION SPECIFIC BROADCASTS WHICH IN THEIR VIEW WERE INACCURATE OR OVERSTEPPED GENERALLY ACCEPTED STANDARDS OF FAIR COMMENT. THE BOARD REMAINS PLEDGED TO RECEIVE AND INVESTIGATE ANY SUCH COMPLAINTS IN THE FUTURE, AS IT HAS IN THE PAST.

HOWEVER, VERY FEW SPECIFIC COMPLAINTS HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE BOARD BY OFFICIALS
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OF THE COUNTRIES TO WHICH RFE/RL BROADCASTS. WE RESTATE OUR WILLINGNESS TO INVESTIGATE THEIR COMPLAINTS WHENEVER THEY BELIEVE A PROGRAM HAS VIOLATED OUR STATEMENT OF MISSION, THE PROGRAM POLICY GUIDELINES

OF RFE/RL OR THE FINAL ACT. MOREOVER, THE BOARD IS PREPARED SERIOUSLY TO CONSIDER, IN CONCERT WITH THE RADIOS, THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROCEDURES FOR MAKING RFE/RL AIRTIME AVAILABLE TO OFFICIALS OF THE SOVIET UNION AND EASTERN EUROPE FOR RESPONSES TO THOSE SPECIFIC COMPLAINTS WHICH HAVE MERIT. NO RADIO ENTERPRISE BROADCASTING 980 HOURS A WEEK CAN AVOID COMMITTING AN OCCASIONAL INACCURACY. IT WOULD BE EMINENTLY MORE SENSIBLE FOR THE GOVERNMENTS INVOLVED TO DEVELOP, IN COOPERATION WITH THE BOARD, AN ORDERLY WAY TO CORRECT SUCH LAPSES WHEN THEY OCCUR, RATHER THAN TO ENGAGE INDISCRIMINATELY IN A COSTLY JAMMING EXERCISE WHICH VIOLATES THE VERY ESSENCE OF THE HELSINKI COMMITMENT TO THE FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION. END TEXT.

4. NEITHER DEPARTMENT NOR BIB HAS ANY ILLUSIONS ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF EARLY ACCEPTANCE OF THIS OFFER, WHICH IS MADE IN ORDER TO BRING HOME TO SOVIETS, AND ESPECIALLY EASTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS, FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN RECENT YEARS IN PURPOSE, DIRECTION AND SPONSORSHIP OF RFE/RL.

5. THE BOARD WISHES TO STRESS THAT THIS OFFER IS BEING MADE WITH THE UTMOST SERIOUSNESS, AND FULL REALIZATION OF ITS POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES, INCLUDING THE POSSIBLE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF MECHANISMS FOR ASSUING THE RIGHT OF REPLY BY HOST GOVERNMENTS. HOWEVER, IT SHOULD BE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD BY ALL CONCERNED THAT THIS OFFER
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PRESENTS A CIVILIZED ALTERNATIVE TO JAMMING MORE IN LINE, IN OUR VIEW, WITH THE LETTER AND SPIRIT OF THE FINAL ACT.

6. PENDING PRELIMINARY REACTIONS FROM SOVIET AND THREE EAST EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS STILL ENGAGED IN JAMMING, NEITHER BIB NOR DEPARTMENT WISH TO SPECIFY PRECISE MECHANISMS BY WHICH RIGHT OF REPLY WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED. POSTS MAY WISH TO SOLICIT PRELIMINARY REACTIONS FORMALLY AS WELL AS INFORMALLY. IF QUESTIONED IN DETAIL, REPLY MAY BE MADE THAT UNDERLYING THINKING EMBRACES FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

A. CHAIRMAN GRONOUSKI AND BOARD STAFF IN WASHINGTON ARE AVAILABLE TO EXPLORE MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE PROCEDURES;

B. SPECIFIC COMPLAINTS AND REPLY STATEMENTS COULD BE ROUTED THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS.

C. BIB, WHOSE MEMBERS HAVE BEEN APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT WITH ADVICE AND CONSENT OF SENATE, WOULD HAVE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY IN CONCERT WITH THE RADIOS FOR DETERMINING WHETHER COMPLAINTS WARRANTED GRANTING RFE/RL AIRTIME TO FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED;

D. REPLY TIME WOULD BE OF APPROXIMATELY EQUAL DURATION TO OFFENDING ITEM, AND BROADCAST AT COMPARABLE HOUR. RFE/RL WOULD RESERVE RIGHT TO COMMENT SUBSEQUENTLY IN RESPONSIBLE MANNER ON TEXT PROVIDED BY HOST AUTHORITIES BUT WOULD NOT EDIT, ALTER OR CURTAIL IT IN ANY WAY.

7. IT MAY BE POINTED OUT TO HOST GOVERNMENTS STILL ENGAGED IN JAMMING THAT PRESIDENT'S BUDGET REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 1979 CONTAINS TEN-MILLION DOLLAR REQUEST FOR SEVEN ADDITIONAL 250 KILOWATT (RFE/RL) TRANSMITTERS, REQUIRED TO IMPROVE PENETRATION OF JAMMING. THIS REQUEST
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FOR FISCAL YEAR 1979 IS IN ADDITION TO THE FOUR NEW 250-KILOWATT TRANSMITTERS FOR RFE/RL ALREADY FUNDED IN FISCAL YEAR 1978 AND THE TWELVE NEW 100-KILOWATT TRANSMITTERS INSTALLED IN 1976 AND 1977. NEW REQUEST WILL DOUBTLESS RECEIVE EQUALLY FIRM BIPARTISAN SUPPORT IN CONGRESS. GOVERNMENTS NOW COMMITTED TO PERSISTING IN JAMMING WILL THEREFORE HAVE TO CONSIDER ADDITIONAL

COSTLY COUNTER-MEASURES IF THEIR INTERFERENCE IS TO
RETAIN CURRENT LEVELS OF EFFECTIVENESS. CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 20 jan 1978
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, ETEL, CSCE
To: GENEVA MOSCOW MULTIPLE
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